



Great Basin Critical Incident Peer Support

Mental Health Care Clinicians Roles and Expectations



Overview – The Mitchell Model

Great Basin Critical Incident Support Groups (CIPS) use the Mitchell Model ([Dr. Jeffery T. Mitchell, PhD](#)) for their meetings. Great Basin CIPS personnel are skilled in delivering a Crisis Management Briefing (CMB), Defusing's, Debriefings, one-on-one support and/or variations of these crisis intervention techniques. All Great Basin CIPS personnel are trained and certified by the International Critical Incident Stress Management Foundation (ICISF). CIPS Group Leaders are highly skilled, experienced and trained in both Basic and Advanced CISM). Great Basin CIPS personnel are trained to support clinicians as warranted.

Our Meeting Format

Prior to the meeting the CIPS Lead and the Clinician agree to the appropriate format for the session. The Peer Supporters, through their generic presentations will work to get the affected personnel comfortable with the Clinician. The role of the Clinician is to cover information they see as being missed by the peer supporter and to address the many specific issues that come up after the Peer Supporters presentations. The Clinicians are free to apply their expertise as they deem necessary, with the Peer Supporters' role changing to one of support as the Clinician moves the meeting into sharing information the feel is essential. When the Clinician has finished presenting the meeting is closed out by the CIPS Group Lead.

The "Module" Concept and Process

Given the type of incidents that occur in the wildland fire environment most of our meetings involve individual "modules." These close-knit organizations are not usually receptive to outside personnel and suggestions. As such the Great Basin Critical Incident Peer Support Groups are carefully assembled with peers and most often meet with individual modules separately. A module may consist of three or four members (or more) of a hotshot or helitack crew that experienced the same event. The facilitator of a "module meeting" is usually the CIPS Group Lead but may also be a CIPS member if the Lead isn't available.

Module Meetings are usually a combination of a Crisis Management Briefing (CMB) and a Defusing. They are often started in a circle to facilitate a more seamless transition to a Defusing. The CMB segment of the meeting follows the standard format which allows for the Peer Supporters to begin to "break the ice" with the personnel involved. In most cases the Lead Peer Supporter will facilitate a review of the "Normal Reactions" sheet with each of the Peer Supporters covering pre-determined topics. The Peer Supporters will work to get the group prepared for and comfortable with the Clinician during their discussions. When the Peer Supporters finish, the Lead will ask the Clinician(s) if they would like to add anything.

The Clinicians are encouraged to speak on whatever they feel is appropriate. The Clinician can also use this opportunity to start the Defusing process. During the Defusing section of the meeting the Clinician will facilitate and the Peer Supporters will follow the lead of the Clinician. When the Clinician has finished the Defusing process the Lead Supporter will wrap up the meeting.

Debriefings

The Great Basin CIPS Group members are trained to participate as support personnel for the Clinician during Debriefings. It should be noted that "Debriefing" has become a generic phase within the wildland fire community for all CISM related activities. Many requests CIPS Groups receive as for a "Debriefing." The Lead Peer Supporter will defer to the Clinician and determine which process is warranted. Should a Debriefing be done the Clinician will have the lead role and the Peer Supporters will operate in a support role.

Meeting Logistics

Whenever possible, Great Basin CIPS groups try to arrange to hold meetings "off-site." Personnel are more comfortable on neutral ground when sharing their thoughts and emotions. Conducting CISM activities away from a government facility is avoided whenever possible. We often utilize a hotel conference room so that we have an area that is quiet, private and free of interruptions from office paging systems, other employees etc.

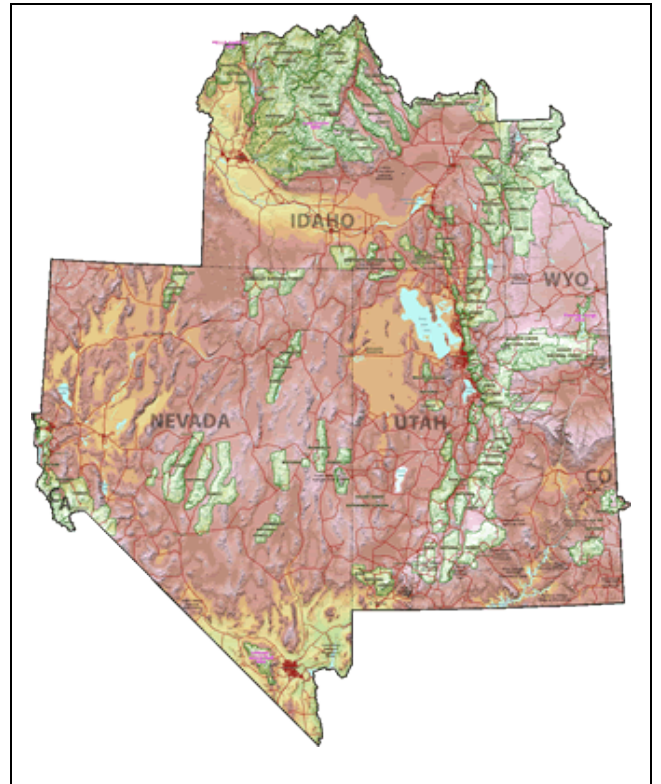
We have also found it helpful to arrange for food and beverages. When possible we will start a meeting around 1000 and after an hour or so break for lunch. By sharing lunch together we have an opportunity for one on one conversation in a less structured format. Further, providing lunch, fruit, juice, coffee tea etc. may offer a form of "comfort" and draw people in.

Travel Requirements

The wildland fire community is surprisingly small in numbers of personnel for the amount of area we cover. The Great Basin alone includes the States of Nevada, and Utah as well as portions of Idaho, Wyoming and California. Clinicians on assignment with a Great Basin CIPS Team may be required to travel to many locations, usually in remote areas that are hours apart to meet with crews and other personnel that are either on a fire or have returned to their home unit after an incident. Great Basin CIPS Groups travel to many locations outside the Great Basin as well.

A great deal of flexibility will be required of the entire group when we are on the road. Many of our meeting locations are in warehouses and barracks. Relocating in the evenings so we are on-site for the next day's meetings is common and our remote locations generally offer sporadic, limited though unique, dining and lodging opportunities.

We generally travel by vehicle (agency or rental) as commercial air service is usually only available at the four major hubs of Boise, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas and Reno. If you are asked to rent a vehicle and travel long distances across remote country and are uncomfortable in doing so a Great Basin CIPS can be assigned to accompany you.



Dress and Clothing

Dress for assignments is casual. The personnel you will be meeting with often spend days away from home and without showers while they are on the fireline. Your attire should be relaxed with no dress pants, skirts, dress shirts, business suits, coats/jackets or ties. Jeans, tab front or button shirts and casual shoes, sandals, tennis shoes or hiking boots are welcome. Many of our assignments are in very scenic locations at higher elevations. A wise Clinician always has a sweater, sweatshirts or coat even in August....

